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grounds of some of his writings, among those whom he not inappropriately calls "pragmatists."

When Poincaré was five years old, he had a severe attack of diphtheria, and partial paralysis. All this made him rather weak for a long time, and perhaps was the origin of his lifelong clumsiness. Of his absence of mind, many stories are told. Once during a walk, he was suddenly surprised to find a wicker bird-cage in his hand. He had unconsciously removed it from a wayside stall.

As regards religion, at the moment of his first communion he was a believer; then belief left him gradually, and, from the age of eighteen he was a sceptic. In politics he was a republican; he held to the principle of personal property; he believed in political equality and the political rights of women,—but here he feared clerical influence.

In mathematics, he cannot be said to belong to any school. In a short life not without physical drawbacks, he has, by regular work, produced about 500 writings—some of them of the very first order.

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HENRI POINCARÉ: AN APPRECIATION.

The foremost of Frenchmen is no more. When Laplace was asked to name the greatest German mathematician he answered, "Pfaff." "But how about Gauss?" said the inquirer. "Ah," replied Laplace, "he is the greatest of all mathematicians." Similarly we might modify our first statement and declare that the foremost of all men is no more. For on July 17, having apparently recovered almost completely from a surgical operation undergone only a few days before, Henri Poincaré, while dressing himself in the morning, was suddenly smitten with an embolism and fell dying in the arms of his wife. While the delegates of learning from all quarters of the globe were assembling in London to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Royal Society, instantly the brightest star in the galaxy of the sciences was eclipsed forever. The sad intelligence was at once flashed around the world, but the details as set forth in the Paris journals of the 18th are but lately at hand.

Commanding the homage and admiration of all, so generous, so pure-hearted, so noble-minded was Poincaré that he aroused the envy and jealousy of none. If "Freedom shrieked when Kosciusko fell," with far more propriety may universal Science, may Philosophy

herself, weep at the passing of her illustrious son. For Poincaré was not a mere specialist, an isolated summit of technical learning, but rather a mountain range of knowledge. His Andean intellect traversed the whole continent of science. In physics, in mathematics, in astronomy, in logic, in philosophy even, he strode from peak to peak in the heights of thought, and wherever his feet touched, there was a blaze enkindled. His compatriots say that France has borne no equal in a hundred years, not since d'Alembert and Laplace. To a foreigner it may be questionable whether the limit may not be pushed much further back, even to the days of Descartes. For while the mind of Poincaré did indeed cast off no single orb of thought to match at once in largeness and in luster the *Mécanique céleste*, or still more the *Théorie analytique des probabilités*, yet it has studded the firmament of exact science with a host of splendors. Scarcely if at all inferior to Laplace or even to Lagrange as analyst, as geometer, as physicist, as astronomer, Poincaré was what they were not—he was a logician of the first order and a philosopher, profound, penetrating, and spiritual. Nor was this all; for his genius in exposition allied him with Clifford and brought him into livelier sympathy with the lay intellect than almost any of his peers in the realm of pure science, while his fine artistic nature and literary sense expressed themselves in a style at once clear and concise, nervous, vivid, picturesque and animated. As subtle as Hume, as comprehensive as Helmholtz, he was least of all a dry-as-dust savant; the keenest of logicians, he did not disdain the graces of rhetoric, but poured out for his fellows the divine draughts of his thought in golden goblets of speech.

It was not, however, as mathematical physicist, as analyst of Fuchsian functions, not as student of the stability of the solar system, not as discoverer of unsuspected figures of equilibrium, not as master of metageometry, not as preeminent logician of science, not as any nor as all of these, that Poincaré rendered his highest service to humanity. It is his supreme merit to have recognized explicitly the inalienable rights of the human spirit, to have opposed firm as Gibraltar the rising tide of naturalism and the pride of knowledge which, intoxicated with the triumphs of physical science and its applications, refuses to see any mystery beyond sense remaining in the world, and boldly aspires by means of mind to pull down mind from its throne and to reduce the universe to a molecular maelstrom, to a wisp of granulated ether. When Napoleon asked Laplace about having written so great a book without once naming the name of God

therein the savant replied, "Sire, I have no need of that hypothesis." Lagrange, a finer spirit, on hearing of this commented: "But it is a beautiful hypothesis that explains many things." In his famous *mot* Laplace has declared his kingship and at the same time defined his kingdom. True, in the realm of matter he had no need of the beautiful hypothesis; in the kingdom of causality, of mass and motion, there is no purpose, no reason, and hence no need of God, the Reason of all. But Poincaré saw through all the phantasies of "scientists," as the astronomer sees through the nebula in Orion, and beheld far behind the phenomena of time and space the eternal realities of self and of soul; while peering into the processes of physical nature deeper even than Laplace himself, he never forgot that they are after all an unsubstantial pageant, that

"On earth is nothing great but man,
In man is nothing great but mind."

So he became in a sense the moderator of the assembly of the sciences. As no other living man he could say, "Thus far and no further;" for he spake as one having authority. Even the Germans, who are seldom over-quick to acknowledge the hegemony of others in the ranks of thought, forgot all national and racial prejudices in the presence of Poincaré and freely declared him to be "the first authority of this age" (*die erste Autorität von dieser Zeit*).

The savant closed his eyes at the age of fifty-eight in the full flush of his powers, at the fever-heat of his intellectual activity. What more he might have done, who knows? But assuredly his mantle will fall upon worthy if not upon equal shoulders; in the paths he has broken there will follow increasing throngs. It is our human form of speech to deplore an irreparable loss. But in some larger, deeper and higher, though indefinable, sense there is perhaps only gain forevermore.

"One accent of the Holy Ghost
The heedless world hath never lost."

Le roi est mort: vive le roi. Poincaré is dead: but deathless is Poincaré.

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